



# Write Guy

Jeff Anderson, M. Ed.

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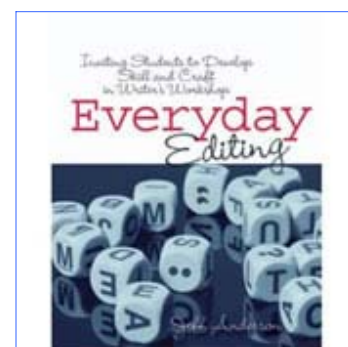
Jeff has delivered training in effective writing and reading strategies and instruction for over 18 years, focusing on grades K-8. The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) recently awarded Jeff's writing and selected him as one of the organization's consultants as well.

Teachers are inspired by Jeff's lively workshops. They are packed with practical strategies that can be used in the long and the short term to develop critical thinkers, writers, and readers.

Jeff's consulting services include literacy coaching, model teaching, and workshops. Workshops range from two-day institutes, keynote addresses, one-day workshops, half-day workshops, and afterschool workshops. If you don't see what you need, email Jeff and he will customize services to fit your school or district's needs.

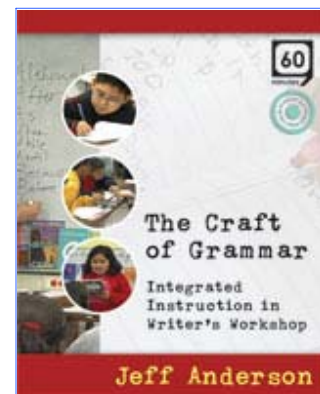
## New & Noteworthy

Jeff's new book [\*Everyday Editing: Inviting Students to Develop Skill and Craft in Writer's Workshop\*](#) available now.



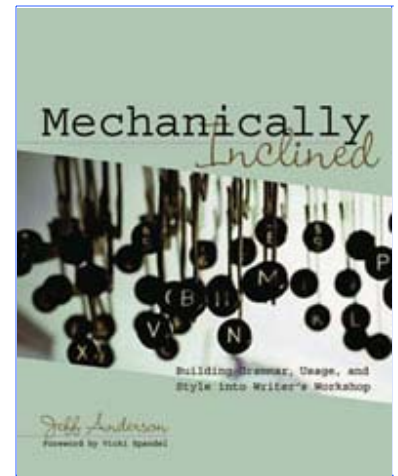
Check out the NEW book and song lists under [Resources for Teachers](#).

As seen in ASCD's Smartbrief: Step into Jeff's classroom with Stenhouse's new professional development DVD, [\*The Craft of Grammar\*](#).



Visit THE NEW MENTOR SENTENCE BLOG!  
[www.greatsentences.blogspot.com](http://www.greatsentences.blogspot.com)

Available from Stenhouse! Order Jeff's book, [\*Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage and Style into Writer's Workshop\*](#). Bulk orders at [QEP, Inc.](#)



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# Grammar History Survey

How confident are you about your own knowledge of grammar and mechanics? Explain.

How confident are you about the quality of your writer's workshop or writing process instruction? Explain.

What would you like to improve about your grammar instruction?

What do you already do well?

# **Student Grammar Survey**

How do you feel about grammar and punctuation?

Are you good at grammar and punctuation? How do you know?

What do you wish your teacher would do when teaching grammar and punctuation?

What kind of grammar or punctuation do you feel you do well? What would you like to do better?

What do you remember about grammar instruction this year? Last year?



# Setting Up a Writer's Notebook

by Jeff Anderson

Before students write their first word in their writer's notebook, it needs to be set up carefully for optimal use as a writing repository. I buy composition books in bulk at back-to-school sales and give them to students who can't find or afford them.

Over the past few years, I have formulated some guidelines that work for me in constructing this writer's playground. The notebooks are an essential tool to help my students become sentence stalkers (Spandel 2003).

First of all, I find it essential to spend a little time up front emphasizing how important the writer's notebooks will be in our class. Students must get a sense of my reverence for the notebooks and my expectations for their care.

After all the students have their notebooks, I instruct students step-by-step on setting them up:

1. Never tear out a page of your notebook. Never. I tell my students, "If you think you must tear out a sheet, see me."
2. Leave a fly page up front, just like in books.
3. Number pages only on the right-hand side, starting after the fly page.
4. Write the page number on the bottom right-hand side. This takes time, but it is a must. Think of the time saved later when a student can put a sticky note on the cover: *Read entry on pages 31-32*. Instead of dutifully thumbing through a notebook, I can turn immediately to the correct pages.
5. Only write on the right-hand pages of the notebook. Keep the left-hand pages blank for revising, rethinking, and tinkering with the facing numbered page. This saves space for the experimenting we will do with craft and mechanics in the notebook.

In the video, you'll notice that students expect to pull out their notebooks, turn to a clean page, and start writing. By the middle of the year, routines for the notebook are well established, and we can move quickly from the "Invitation to Notice" (looking closely at a sentence at the start of workshop) to focused freewriting and guided practice in the notebooks.

## References

- Spandel, Vicki. 2003. *Creating Young Writers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
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Adapted from *Mechanically Inclined*.

# 20 Most Common Errors in Order of Frequency

(Connors and Lunsford)

1. No comma after introductory element
2. Vague pronoun reference
3. No comma in compound sentence
4. Wrong word
5. No comma in nonrestrictive element <sup>1</sup>
6. Wrong/missing inflected endings <sup>2</sup>
7. Wrong or missing prepositions
8. Comma splice
9. Possessive apostrophe error
10. Tense shift
11. Unnecessary shift in person
12. Sentence fragments
13. Wrong tense or verb form
14. Subject-verb agreement error
15. Lack of comma in a series
16. Pronoun agreement error
17. Unnecessary comma with restrictive element <sup>3</sup>
18. Run-on or fused sentence
19. Dangling or misplaced modifier <sup>4</sup>
20. *It's* versus *its* error

Adapted from Connors, Robert J., and Andrea Lunsford. 1988. "Frequency of Formal Errors in Current College Writing, or Ma and Pa Kettle Do Research." *College Composition and Research* 39:395–409.

1. Clauses that add information that is not essential to the meaning. These clauses are set off with a comma or commas if they interrupt a sentence.
2. The suffixes *-s*, *-es*, *-ing*, or *-ed* added to the ends of verbs to reveal when an event occurs or occurred. Students often drop inflectional endings, which causes agreement and tense problems.
3. Clauses that must be in the sentence for it to be a complete sentence. Without the restrictive clause, the sentence's meaning would be altered completely. *The man who stole our wind chimes just walked past the house.* If we took out the phrase *who stole our wind chimes*, the sentence would read *The man just walked past the house.* The foreboding meaning would be lost; thus, we do not insert commas around this phrase because it is essential to the sentence's meaning.
4. Placing a modifier in the wrong place, or not modifying the subject of the sentence, which confuses the meaning of the message, is a dangling modifier. Incorrect example: *Deprived of coffee, the papers remained ungraded.* Correct example: *Deprived of coffee, the English teacher was unable to grade the papers.*

# Freewriting Rules!

By Jeff Anderson

1. Write. Just write. Keep your hand moving. (The only way to do freewriting wrong is to not write or to quit early.)
2. Experiment with spelling, punctuation, and grammar. (This as opposed to “don't worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar.” Though we shouldn't worry about it, we should attempt to do the best we can.)
3. Go wherever your writing (thinking on the page) takes you. (If another story comes to mind, maybe that's what you should be writing about. Go for it.)
4. Be specific. (As you teach strategies like naming concrete nouns and snapshots, encourage those things in first-draft freewriting by praising them when read aloud.)
5. As Natalie Goldberg says, “You are free to write the worst junk in America” (1990, 4). (Students need to know that everyone has doubts about their writing. Allowing some writing to be garbage allows our writing to flow and good things to emerge.)

## Reference

Goldberg, Natalie. 1990. *Wild Mind: Living the Writer's Life*. New York: Bantam.

Adapted from *Mechanically Inclined*.

## Sample Student "Hair" Writing

### Hair

When my dad wakes up his hair looks all puffy. My mom's hair looks all tangled up. My little sister's hair looks puffy like dad's. My Bro's hair looks all crooked. My little ~~sister's~~ brother's hair looks the same every time he goes to sleep. My hair, every time I go to a party I spike it up. When I go to sleep & I wake up my hair is still spiked up like a porcupine. All my cousins' hair when they wake up looks all mist up.

## Using Short Mentor Texts

*Students cannot become facile at writing in general and using conventions in particular if they do them only now and then—no more than I can get thin by dieting on Fridays.*

—Janet Angelillo, *A Fresh Approach to Teaching Punctuation*

Common sense tells us we have to do more than mention mechanics and grammar: we have to teach them. We can't expect our students to be flexible enough to apply these conventions if we don't cycle them in front of our students in various ways. By discussing the colon and figuring out what it does in well-crafted texts, students will begin to read like writers. Not just for style, but to see how writers achieve that style.

One good thing about daily correct-all is that they do force students to consider mechanics and grammar on a daily basis. But the correct-all is rarely applied to students' own writing. It's all about searching for what is wrong with writing rather than what is right. Spandel (2003) frames the teaching of grammar and mechanics differently. In her book *Creating Young Writers*, she explains how she tells students that she has noticed they are ready for a writer's secret—a secret that all writers share that helps make their writing sizzle. The goal is not to point to what is wrong with their writing, but to encourage students by showing them what they are ready for now.

Leslie Hart (2002) suggests there are other reasons the brain needs repetition. He claims that input needs repetition, not in terms of drill and kill but a constant cycling: "Repetition within input can be valuable . . . because what a particular brain is not ready for at one time will be welcomed and utilized at another." (145)

I know the value and necessity of cycling through all the mechanical issues. We have to cycle through them explicitly and intentionally several times for students to recognize the patterns. Until we build their schemata, students will have a hard time intentionally crafting their prose.

If our struggling readers need to see a word forty times to learn it (Beers 2002), then I'll make a leap and say students need to see grammar and mechanics rules highlighted in different contexts at least that many times to own them. If the kids don't know a particular structure or know that they have options, some may not ever go into the realm of complex sentences or other effective rhetorical devices that separate functional writing from effective writing.

My experience teaching English language learners certainly bears this out. In fact, many of my students are flooded daily with oral models of language that don't correlate with what is considered Standard English. Students need scaffolding and modeling to hear the difference. It's not automatic for every child.

By the third day of school, the teacher who hates daily correct-all wants to start a daily routine. Anyone who has worked with a challenging group of students—in other words, all of us—knows that routines create safe structures. Brain research says it; Nancie Atwell (1998) and Lucy Calkins (2003) say it. Routines give our students something to count on, a place to hang knowledge, a place to share and explore every day.

Our kids write every day. I argue that they need a writer's secret every day, too. I have started calling this an invitation to notice. I ask, "What do you notice?" (about the powerful text). Their comments in response to this question drive our discussion. Students need to stare at and relish some well-written snippets of effective mentor texts. Every day we look at some writing to aspire to or imitate—texts that teach with their artistic punctuation or jaw-dropping grammar. An appositive becomes much more than merely a renaming of the noun it precedes or follows; it becomes a construction that allows a writer to combine sentences for rhythm and effect. One more pattern, one

more choice to add to students' style repertoires. I let my students know I will share a writer's secret during the first few minutes of class almost every day. My students know these first few minutes are important; they know they must listen because they will hear secrets they will be able to use, taking the guesswork out of what makes writing effective.

I share writer's secrets in several ways:

- Lift a sentence from literature and let students tell me what is right about it, generalize some principles, and apply them to their writing
- Lift a sentence from literature and leave out one piece of the punctuation I've taught or make one usage error and have the students correct it
- Lift a sentence from student writing and imitate its mistake, whether it's a frequently seen error or a point I need to make
- Ask students to imitate a construction and talk about its uses
- Ask students to copy down an example of a rule from a mentor text, and then discuss it

In my class, these five minutes each day will never include a sentence so riddled with errors that we could never deeply discuss the errors or the purpose for the mechanics. These quick warm-ups recycle or introduce information that the students need to know.

The key to the writer's secret or invitation to notice is that the mentor text is useful and is applied in writing that day—pointed to again during writer's workshop and at the close of writer's workshop. Evidence of the writer's secret's use is processed again at the end. If it's not yet clear, then more focused practice may follow.

Remember that this practice is only a small part of teaching students about the uses of mechanics. It supplements and recycles deep instruction that is steeped in literature and application in student writing.

I find establishing a few minutes at the beginning of the class ensures that I hit high-payoff grammar and mechanics rules sufficiently. Kids' brains can only handle one new thing at a time, so I make sure this space doesn't become a catchall.

In addition, I provide order in my classroom—a structure and routine kids can count on. Katie Wood Ray (2000) says that we have to make our workshop routines and rituals as consistent as lunchtime. If I waver, the quality of my workshop suffers. If our kids are going to breathe conventions, it is essential to insert quick spurts of them more often and regularly. We can't wait to edit until the final copy; it pays off to take time for these quick spurts of well-selected craft and mechanics lessons that are based on student need and what researchers say kids need to know.

## References

- Atwell, Nancie. 1998. *In the Middle: New Understandings About Reading, Writing, and Learning*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Beers, Kylene. 2002. *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Calkins, Lucy. 2003. *Units of Study for Primary Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Hart, Leslie. 2002. *Human Brain and Human Learning*. Covington, WA: Books for Educators.
- Ray, Katie Wood. 2002. *What You Know by Heart: How to Develop Curriculum for Your Writing Workshop*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Spandel, Vicki. 2003. *Creating Young Writers*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Adapted from *Mechanically Inclined*.

# The WriteGuy.net

## Grammar Song List



I use the songs below in my classroom to help bring a little joy into grammar instruction. The songs can introduce the grammatical concepts or be played in the background to help etch the concepts into students' long (or at least longer) term memory.

Song	Artist	Concept
Anticipation	Carly Simon	Colons
I've Been Everywhere	Johnny Cash	Prepositions
Stop in the Name of Love	The Supremes	Periods
Shout!	The Isley Brothers	Exclamation Mark
If I Had a Million Dollars	Barenaked Ladies	Comma after a subordinating clause (AAAWWUBBIS)
Love Stinks	J. Geils Band	Two Word Sentence (Subject/verb)
Mr. Morton	Grammar Rock	Subjects/Predicates
Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves	Cher	Serial Commas
What I'd Say	Ray Charles	Dialogue
Time is on My Side	Irma Thomas	Verb Tenses

### Songs to Use in the Express-Lane Edit

The Express-Lane Edit strategy can be found in the book *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer's Workshop* (Stenhouse, 2005) by Jeff Anderson.

<i>Song</i>	<i>Artist</i>
The Typewriter	Leonard Slatkin
Flight of the Bumble Bee	Eugene Ormandy & Philadelphia Orchestra
Sabre Dance	Leonard Slatkin

### Background Music for Writing

<i>Album</i>	<i>Artist</i>
The Hours	Soundtrack
Meet Joe Black Soundtrack	Soundtrack
December	George Winston
Vivaldi Four Seasons	Janine Jansen

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Go to [writeguy.net](http://writeguy.net) and click on "Resources for Teachers" to find links to purchase these songs.

## 2.1 No Comma in a Compound Sentence

### In Plain English

Use a comma and a coordinating conjunction to join two independent clauses. Conjunctions are connectors that link equal words, phrases, or clauses. Coordinating conjunctions cue readers in on the relationships between ideas.

### AKA

Run-on sentence.

*Commas are used when two complete sentences are joined together, using such conjunctions as and, or, but, while, or yet.*

—Lynne Truss, *Eats, Shoots & Leaves*

As writers mature, they need more sophisticated ways to express their developing thinking. Enter the compound sentence. Compound sentences show links or connections between two ideas. Students use oral compound sentences correctly long before they can punctuate them. Jennifer will say, “You said grammar would be fun, but this comma stuff is hard.” However, when writing the compound sentence, she may not insert the comma after *fun*, making the error of no comma in a compound sentence. The coordinating conjunction is there, but the comma has gone missing.

Editor Bill Walsh (2000) puts it this way, “How do you know when to use a comma when these conjunctions (*and* and *but*) link two clauses? If there’s a new subject—or the old subject is restated—use the comma. If the second clause shares a subject with the first (and that subject is not restated), don’t use a comma” (pp. 75–76). For example, this sentence from Wendelin Van Draanen’s book *Flipped* (2001) is punctuated correctly: *I was relieved, but I also felt like a weenie*. Both sides of the compound sentence have subjects and verbs, and the sentence is joined with a coordinating conjunction, so the sentence needs a comma. On the other hand, if the sentence read *I was relieved but also felt like a weenie*, a comma wouldn’t be needed because the subject is not restated in the second half of the sentence nor is a new one added.

Compound sentences are an essential tool in a writer’s toolbox. To make this concept easier for my students, I use the mnemonic “FANBOYS” to refer to the coordinating conjunctions: **F**or, **A**nd, **N**or, **B**ut, **O**r, **Y**et, **S**o. It’s easier for my students to remember the mnemonic first, and then connect the FANBOYS to coordinating conjunctions later.

Often students become confused about the use of coordinating conjunctions. Many overgeneralize the rule of using the FANBOYS and a comma to join two independent clauses, believing it to mean that they should place a comma before the FANBOYS any time they are used. They create monstrosities such as: *Crystal, and I walked to Lackland City Trailer Park, and bought Cokes at the Diamond Shamrock*. I lead them back to the visual scaffold again and again, reminding them to use a comma and one of the FANBOYS to join two sentences or independent clauses. (See Section 1.1, Fragments, for more on how to identify a sentence or independent clause.) Another mistake students often make is confusing the meaning of each of the FANBOYS. Each coordinating conjunction has a meaning and shows a specific type of relationship.

### Student Error

*I hated the way the water tasted like sand and salt so I didn’t let another drop get in my mouth.*



## Behind the Error

In writing about her trip to the coast, Ashley senses a link between the idea of not liking how the water tasted and not letting another drop in her mouth. By using *so* as her coordinating conjunction, she also demonstrates her knowledge that *so* shows a cause-effect relationship between the ideas. She knows she doesn't want a period, but she hasn't quite mastered using the comma as well as the coordinating conjunction to link the two ideas. When Ashley inserts the comma after *salt*, her compound sentence won't be missing a thing.

## Mentor Text

*Every day was a happy day, **and** every night was peaceful.* (p. 11)  
—E. B. White, *Charlotte's Web*

*Celia says you're in shock, **but** I think you're just lazy.* (p. 59)  
—Nancy Farmer, *The House of the Scorpion*

*You can pick your friends, **but** you're stuck with family.* (p. 1)  
—Jeff Foxworthy, *You Might Be a Redneck If . . . This Is the Biggest Book You've Ever Read*

*Hiccup leapt out of the way, **but** the sharp point of the blade pierced his shirt and tore a neat slice out of it.* (p. 19)  
—Cressida Cowell, *How to Be a Pirate*

# LESSON

## Flipping for the Compound Sentence Pattern

When introducing the compound sentence, I review the simple sentence or independent clause. I use every opportunity to connect the compound sentence to everything they know, from the need for a subject and verb in a sentence to the fact that they use compound sentences every day in their spoken speech: "Mr. Anderson, I got my report card signed, but I didn't bring it."

After reviewing the simple sentence, I ask, "Does anyone know how to make a compound sentence?" After showing them all the ways they know compound sentences, we create a compound sentence wall chart, with graphics and FANBOYS. Then I show students two sentences from *Flipped*:

*I am still trying to break free, but the girl's got me in a death grip.* (p. 3)  
—Bryce's point of view

*I chased Bryce up the walkway, and that's when everything changed.* (p. 13)  
—Julianna's perspective

We discuss what students notice about the sentences, pointing out the subjects and verbs on each side of each sentence as well as the commas and coordinating conjunctions. We then compare the sentences to the compound sentence wall chart, and we discuss how each of these sentences needs a comma to complete the whole compound sentence mystique. We take some time to chant the FANBOYS: *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*. (My students always appreciate an opportunity for sanctioned loudness.)

Then I write a new pair of sentences on the overhead: *Mr. Anderson, I got my report card signed. I didn't bring it.* I explain that, when we have two ideas that are connected, as writers we may want to join them. "First, as a speaker how would you join the ideas? As a writer? Right, the revision would be: *Mr. Anderson, I got my report*

card signed, but I didn't bring it. Why didn't we use *and* or *so*?" Slowly, I start referring to the FANBOYS' meanings as we continue to practice writing compound sentences.

I put up the *Flipped* sentences again without the commas and have students mark where they belong, referring to the wall chart for the language and visual cues to discuss and conceptualize the pattern. After students practice writing a few sentences, they quickly reread a past journal entry or essay and correct any compound sentences that need correcting or find two sentences to combine. We build in the routine of adding every new concept to our living and growing editor's checklist: *Check sentences*.

Later, I take an overly punctuated compound sentence, such as the one shown in AKA of the Operator's Manual, and use it to clarify that using a comma every time we use one of the FANBOYS is an overgeneralization of the rule.

## Visual Scaffold

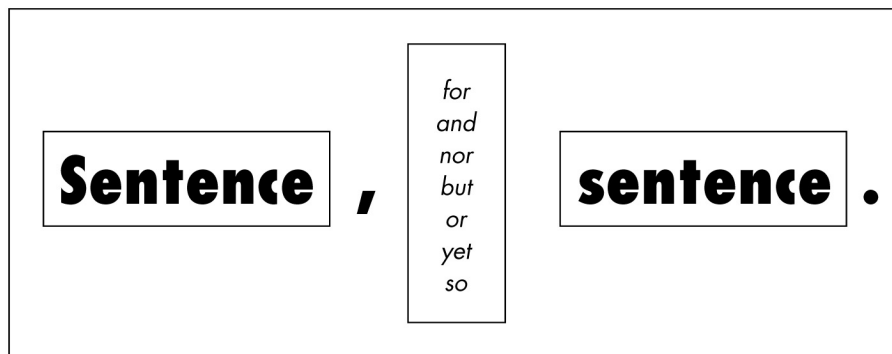
### Coordinating Conjunctions Defined Chart

Use a comma and a **conjunction** to join two sentences. The coordinating conjunctions most often used are in boldface type.

Coordinating Conjunctions (FANBOYS)	Relationship Expressed
for, <b>so</b>	Shows a cause-effect relationship.
<b>and</b>	Joins things or ideas that are alike or similar, implies a continuation of thought.
<b>but</b> , yet	Shows a contrasting relationship.
<b>or</b>	Indicates a choice between things or ideas.
nor	Continues a negative thought.

### Compound Sentence Graphic

Graphic representations make sentence patterns concrete to students by helping them "see" the patterns. This chart was inspired by Joyce Armstrong Carroll and Edward E. Wilson in *Acts of Teaching* (1993). A reproducible "Compound and Serial Comma Sentence Pattern Scaffolds" is provided in the Appendix.



# **FOR**

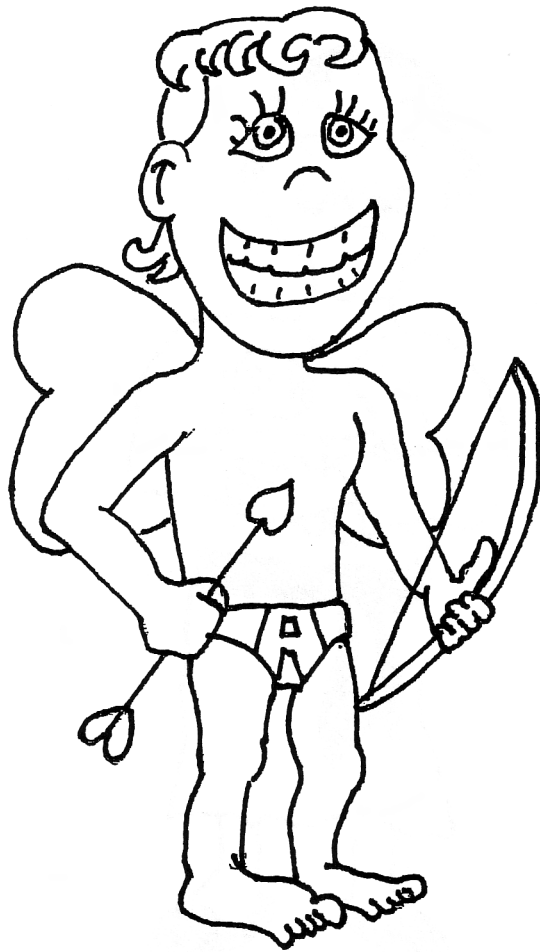
## **The Problem Finder**



**Connects a solution  
with a problem.**

# **AND**

## **The Matchmaker**



**Connects two ideas  
that go together.**

# NOR

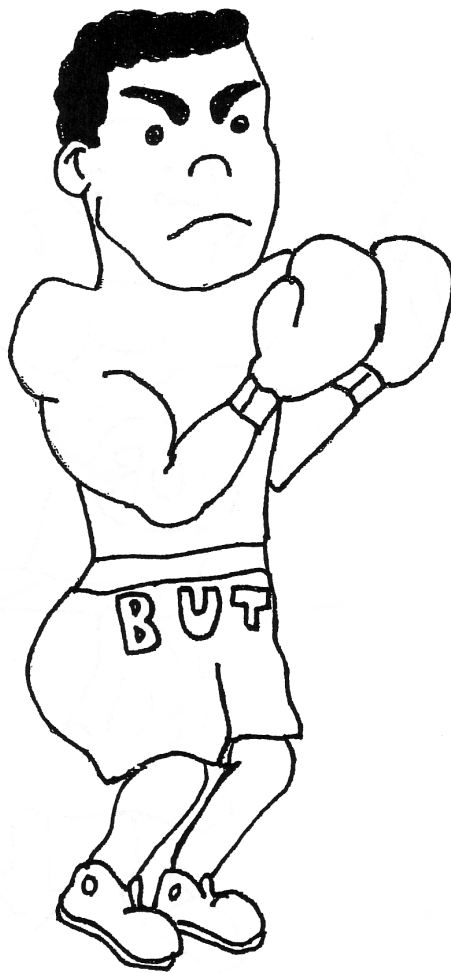
## Mr. Negative



**Negative form of *or*.**

# **BUT**

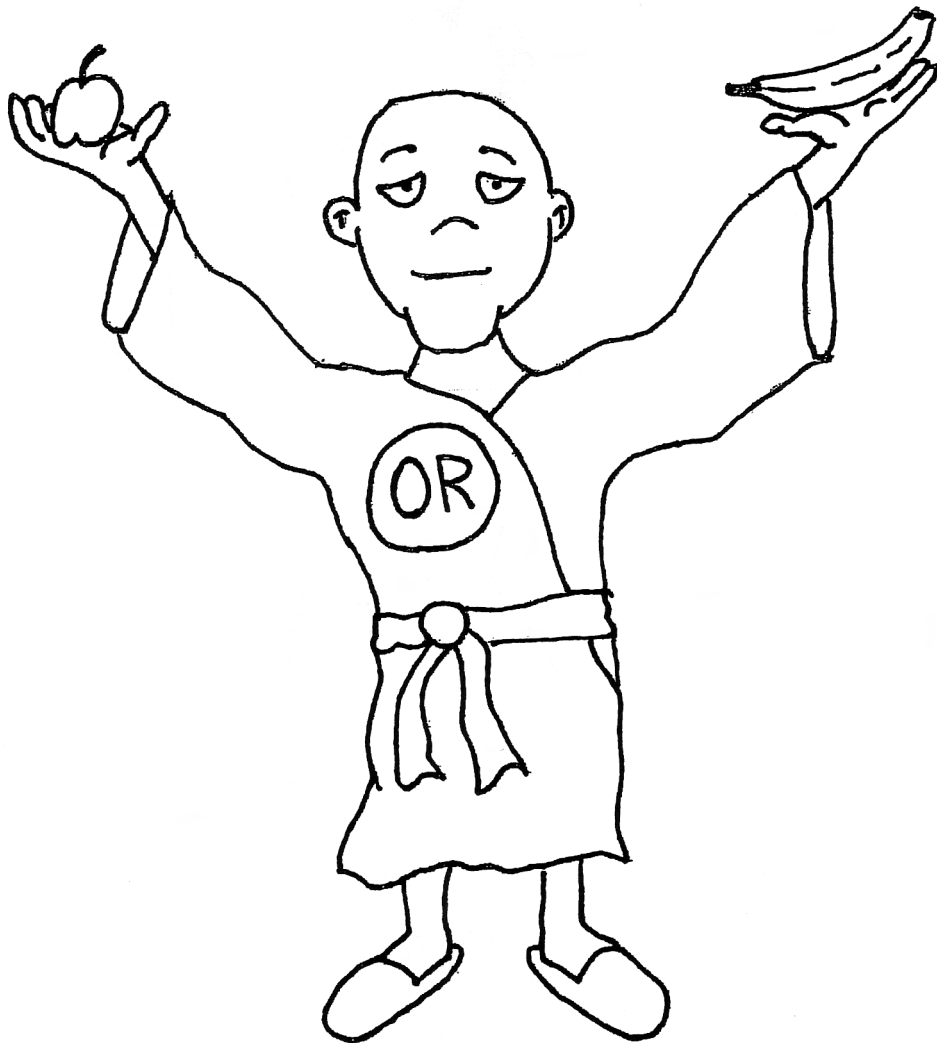
## **King Conflict**



**Connects two ideas that  
go against each other.**

# OR

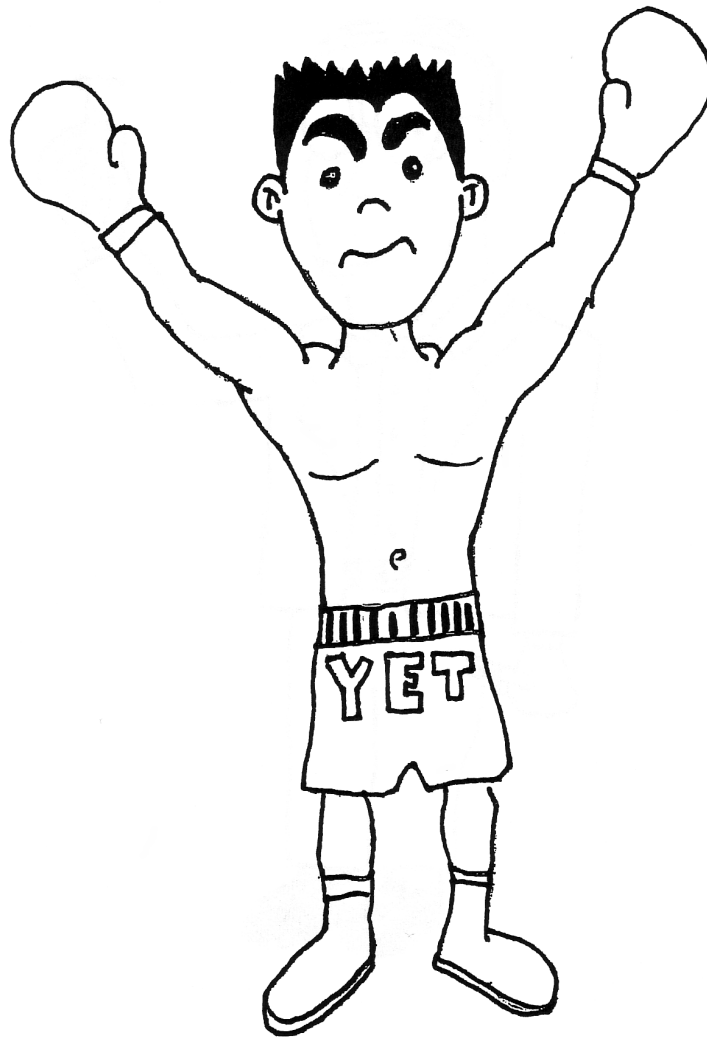
## The Decision-Maker



**Connects two choices.**

# **YET**

## **But's Evil Twin Brother**

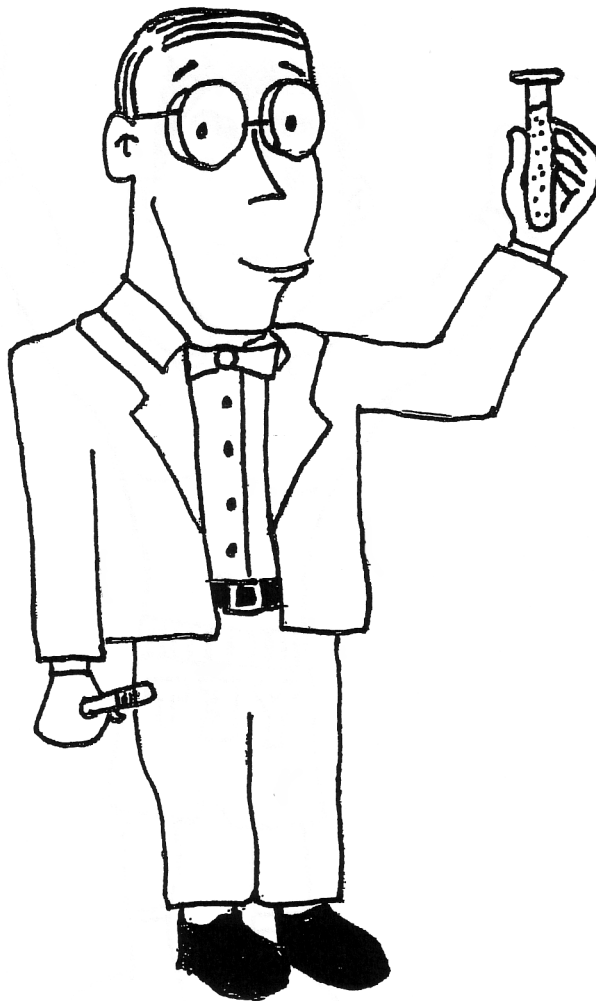


**Connects two ideas that  
go against each other.**



# **SO**

## **The Problem-Solver**



**Connects a problem  
with a result.**

# Making the Craft-Grammar Connection by Introducing AAAWWUBBIS

by Jeff Anderson

When I Was Little is my answer to all students who say, "I don't have anything to write about."

"Oh really," I reply. *When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth* (1993), by Jamie Lee Curtis, is a lively picture book that sparks memories by reflecting on eating Cheetos, naptime, floaties, and time-outs. The text follows an easy-to-imitate pattern. I read it aloud.

Afterward, I ask, "What phrase is repeated again and again?"

"When I was little," returns a chorus of voices.

"On the top of the first line, I want you to write today's date. Then, skip a line and write 'When I Was Little List' as the title." (I model each step on the overhead as I explain.)

"We are going to make a list of memories that all start with four words. Guess what they are?"

As the class chants, "When I was little," I write the words to start my list on the overhead: *When I was little, I fell in the toilet.* "I am brainstorming by starting off everything on my list with 'When I was little.'"

"Does anyone notice something else I did that we will all need to do each time on our lists?"

"You put something after it," Damien offers.

"Yes, Damien, what did I put after it?"

"That you fell in the toilet."

"Right, I put what happened when I was little. Anything else, class?" I tap on the overhead very near the comma.

"You put a comma after 'little.'"

"That's right. We put a comma after 'little.'" (We'll follow up with why at the end of the lesson because we need to get listing.)

"Now it's your turn. Brainstorm a list and start every memory with 'When I was little.' Don't forget your comma. List as many as you can! You have four minutes—go." I continue listing on the overhead for two more entries, then I turn off the overhead and circulate. As long as almost everybody is listing, I extend the time.

"Now, tell a person near you what's on your list. You have five minutes."

After five minutes I ask, "What did you hear?" I take a few responses. "I got so many more ideas when I heard other people's lists. Let's add more to our lists. You have three minutes."

After three minutes I say, "Let's look back at our lists. Did everyone remember to use commas and to put a period at the end of each sentence? Check and fix. One minute. Go!"

"Looking over your list, do you see anything that's connected? If so, draw lines between them." I model this on the overhead.

"Now go back and circle one sentence or a group of connected sentences on your list." I, of course, circle *When I was little, I fell in the toilet.*

"Turn to the first section of your writer's notebook and find the next clean page. Write today's date above the first line. Skip a line and write the title of the list: 'When I Was Little.' As soon as you have that down, continue freewriting for eight to ten minutes. You can't do it wrong as long as you keep writing. If you run completely dry, refer back to your list and write more. Write the entire time." Students share writing with a partner first, then a few share with the class.

I follow up with some mechanics instruction at the end of the class or first thing at the next class meeting. "So you told me I needed a comma after 'When I was little,' but, at the time, I didn't ask my irritating question, 'Why?' Why? Why do we put the comma after 'little?'"

Finally, Natalie ventures a safe answer, "Because it's correct."

"Yes, it is indeed correct, Natalie, but why? Listen to me read it aloud. 'When I was little [pause], I fell in the toilet.'"

"You paused!" Matthew blurts.

"True. The comma told me to pause. There are several words that, when they are located at the beginning of a sentence, signal you to use a comma to separate the introductory phrase from the rest of the sentence. They are comma causers."

Then, I teach students about the AAWWUBBIS. My friend Cathy Byrd, a sixth-grade teacher at Rudder Middle School, let me in on the power of the AAWWUBBIS (As, Although, After, While, When, Unless, Because, Before, If, Since). The joy of this lesson comes with the AAWWUBBIS whoop, which is along the lines of a good Wahoo! AAWWUBBIS (A-WOOH-BIS)! Cathy tells her students that if they start a sentence with an AAWWUBBIS, they are almost guaranteed to have a comma in the sentence. I remind them that the comma never immediately follows the AAWWUBBIS. I tell them that they will hear or feel the pause when they read the sentence. I put the AAWWUBBIS list on the board. We practice orally. The students make up a sentence beginning with an AAWWUBBIS and tell me where they would put the comma. Eventually, students include at least one AAWWUBBIS sentence in a longer piece they are working on in writer's workshop.

Later, Cathy teaches students how the AAWWUBBIS part of the sentence is a fragment without the second part of the sentence. She says students "feel very mature when they realize how easily complex sentences can be written."

### *Reference*

Curtis, Jamie Lee. 1993. *When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth*. New York: Joanna Cotler.

Adapted from *Mechanically Inclined*.

## AAAWWUBBIS and More!

### Common Subordinating Conjunctions

<b>After</b>	After what seemed like forever, Royal finally slowed the team to a trot and then to a walk. —Jennifer Donnelly, <i>A Northern Light</i> , p. 78
<b>Although</b> (Even though and though)	Although Vincent is gone, I can still have fun without him. —Miguel Espinoza, sixth grader
<b>As</b>	As I walked outside for recess, he was almost certain there'd be a gold star next to his name when he returned. —Louis Sachar, <i>There's a Boy in the Girls' Bathroom</i> , p. 97
<b>When</b> (Whenever)	Whenever Ms. Franny has one of her fits, it reminds me of Winn-Dixie in a thunderstorm. —Kate DiCamillo, <i>Because of Winn-Dixie</i>
<b>While</b>	While he eats lunch, he talks about what he will eat for dinner. —David Klass, <i>You Don't Know Me</i> , p. 30
<b>Until</b>	Until then, Marian had never really thought much about vocal technique. —Russell Freedman, <i>The Voice That Challenged a Nation</i> , p. 14
<b>Because</b>	Because she is holding the microphone so close to her face, each moment of contact sounds like a heavy blow. —Myla Goldberg, <i>The Bee Season</i> , p. 276
<b>Before</b>	Before last summer, before the man ever came to town, I figure I was getting ready for him. —Cynthia Rylant, <i>A Fine White Dust</i> , p. 4
<b>If</b>	If you don't lie to anyone else in the world, you shouldn't lie to yourself either. —Gordan Korman, <i>No More Dead Dogs</i> , p. 28
<b>Since</b>	Since fourth grade, she'd kept a running list of them and liked to reread it to see if she could get the stories to go further in her head. —Naomi Shihab Nye, <i>Habibi</i> , p. 13

### Subordinating Conjunctions by Functions: Dependent Clause Causers Revealed

<b>Time</b>	<b>Cause-Effect</b>	<b>Opposition</b>	<b>Condition</b>
After	As	Although	As long as
Before	Because	Even though	If
During	Since	Though	In order to
Since	So	While	Unless
Until		Whatever	Until
When/Whenever			Whatever
While			

# Introducing Express-Lane Edits: Returning to Context

by Jeff Anderson

One thing all my students are familiar with is the express lane at the grocery store. Sometimes you don't have time to shop for everything. If you only need to get a carton of milk, you can go through the express lane and save time and hassle. I take this familiar routine and merge it into editing tasks.

How often do we get bogged down in the totality of all that needs fixing so that editing becomes an ordeal for students as well as the teacher? What if we narrowed down our editing task to a few items? We'd be able to edit more often and more quickly and make editing in context more a part of the everyday fabric of writer's workshop. In short, "express-lane edits" get my students to reread their work and think about how to edit their writing in ways that clarify their ideas. It is also my version of "Clean up on aisle three!" It helps us focus on our editor's checklist, moving the principles into the writer's notebook. (For more on creating an editor's checklist with your students, see Chapter 3, pages 42–49, in *Mechanically Inclined*.) I can post an editor's checklist on my classroom walls, but if I don't use it, my students won't, and they won't internalize the concepts.

Each student needs a piece of first-draft writing to begin—not a final copy or a completed essay, but a messy beginning like a writer's notebook entry or a freewrite. I use freewrites to get my students writing fluently; I use express-lane edits to get my students editing fluently.

First, as with most things, I model the process. The first time we do an express-lane edit, I plan ahead. While students freewrite, I write an entry on a transparency. After the freewrite, I say, "I know many of you go to the store a lot. When you're in a hurry, which line do you go to?"

"The express lane."

"It's quick. You're in, you're out," I add. I explain that, like the routine they are used to at the store, I want them to become equally familiar with using the express-lane edit as a way to reread their writing, a way to "check out" important items in their work.

"For example," I say, "we've been talking about apostrophes—when to insert and when to delete them. I want to show you a quick way to deal with this editing item. I call it the express-lane edit."

I turn on the overhead, revealing my freewrite. "Let's take the freewrite we did on neighbors," I say. "Now, before I read it, I need to make my shopping list." Beneath my writing, on the left half of the transparency, I draw a box.

"We have to decide what's going to go in the box—a sort of shopping list." I write *Items to Check Out* at the top of the box.

"Since we just added apostrophes to our editor's checklist, let's 'check out' our freewrites for apostrophes. Should we insert or delete any?" I write *apostrophes* in my box. Students copy the box, the title, and the word *apostrophes* beneath their freewrites in their writer's notebooks. This is the perfect time for a quick review, and I have students copy a few details about apostrophes that we have been discussing. Next, we draw another box to the right of the Items to "Check Out" box. "The box on the right is titled "Receipts." In this box, you show me your changes.

"Now we're ready to do the express-lane edit. Before you try, I will show you how to do it using

my writing.” I read over the text, making my invisible thinking process visible by thinking aloud—modeling my problem-solving process.

As I make changes, I add each change to my Receipts box. I model using the language our state test uses, including *insert* and *delete*. I also note when I use the item correctly. This is essential as it shows kids we’re not only shopping for what they need to fix but also for what they did well. If we are going to change kids’ attitudes about editing, we need to make it about how well we used the concepts also. Then I have students do the express-lane edit on their own writing. If they find nothing to change, they read it a second time. If students still find no mistakes, they read the writing backward, word by word, like some journalists do. If they find nothing at all to correct, they write *I found no errors after reading the above writing three times*, followed by their signature. This way everyone always has a receipt.

As an extension, I may cue students to use a specific convention or grammatical construction before they begin their freewrite. Then whatever they were cued to use will be our focus in the express-lane edit.

While students reread their work for the express-lane edit, I like to play music. A perfect piece for this is “The Typewriter,” by Leonard Slatkin, which is easily and inexpensively available on the iTunes website. Music does much to change the affect of these mechanics-rich experiences.

If students are only rereading their work, we are still making a step in the right direction. What’s really funny is that kids, when limited to what they should edit, for some reason love to edit for something you didn’t list. “Sir, I spelled a word wrong. Can I fix that?” I respond, as if I am doing them a favor, “Well, I guess.” Again, if the only benefit they get from this is rereading, then that’s a start. And, if I am calling their attention to an important concept in a real context, that’s even better. If they actually integrate an apostrophe consciousness into their rereading and rechecking process, Hallelujah! That’s the goal.

The express-lane edit is a class ritual that can be done with or without partners and gives us the ever-important repetition in a meaningful context.

Adapted from *Mechanically Inclined*.

"Hate bounces," I think means that hate passes from one person to another and maybe then it bounces back. For example if a 8<sup>th</sup> grader bully bullies a 7<sup>th</sup> grader maybe he or she will bully somebody younger and it will keep going and maybe it will bounce back. I think this hate can stop by everyone being respectful or telling the bully to stop and if it doesn't work maybe tell an adult to help you. But trying to not spread it will maybe help the problem stop. I think that if everyone was kind and respectful to everyone there would be no wars, or bombs, or guns or any type of weapon because you wouldn't need it and if that happened there would be no hate.

Shopping List

✓ Verb tense

⌚ time

Does it stay the same?

Receipt

My writing stayed in the present tense.

The way I know it stayed in the present tense is because my verbs end in -s or -es and sometimes in -ing.

# **Pulling It All Together in Writer's Workshop**

*by Jeff Anderson*

If you want to pull together all the advice from this video and apply it in your own classroom, you can distill my principles down to these six core ideas:

1. Use the shortest mentor text possible so that kids can cling to the craft and meaning without being overwhelmed by words and punctuation.
2. Teach one thing at a time and apply it to daily writing. This encourages students to continue inventing and generating text while cueing them into specific concepts and strategies.
3. Add quick daily doses of grammar and mechanics experiences with short mentor texts and editing, so that students have ongoing, shared experience playing with and understanding grammar and mechanics.
4. Provide rich experiences in the writer's notebook to apply and play with mentor sentences as new concepts are introduced.
5. Give students scaffolds in the forms of examples and visual inserts for their writer's notebooks to help them start and continue collecting, categorizing, and imitating mentor texts.
6. Saturate your walls with visuals that provide reinforcement of the concepts introduced and used by writers. The placement and color of these visuals can reinforce key concepts that students need to know, helping them make connections and distinctions of meaning.

Adapted from *Mechanically Inclined*.